

Obituary



BYRON EVANS

Byron Evans, a highly regarded and eminent Welsh general physician and cardiologist, died on 1 January 1990 at the age of 77. Born in Llanon, Cardiganshire, the only son of a master-mariner, he trained at the London Hospital, winning prizes in anatomy, pathology, and clinical medicine along the way. He qualified MB BS and in the Conjoint Board Examination in 1936, adding the London MD and MRCP three years later. His resident and other early appointments were all at the London and, in listing some of the major events in his life, he recalled that as a pathology assistant he had performed one thousand postmortems. During the second world war, he was officer in charge of a Royal Air Force medical division serving for some of the time in the Middle East. He then became a consultant in Cardiff, remaining until his retirement in 1977 as the senior physician in the University Hospital of Wales.

He was made Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1957, was a member of the Association of Physicians of Great Britain and Ireland, and a member of the British Cardiac Society. His publications, reflecting a wide range of interests in general medicine and cardiology, included a chapter on communicable diseases in a textbook of medicine edited by Garland and Phillips and papers on leishmaniasis, toxic polyneuritis, the Fanconi syndrome, hyperparathyroidism, syphilitic aortitis, cardiomyopathy, aortic dissection, and various aspects of the treatment of hypertension and heart failure. He showed the advantage of oral thiazides over parenteral mercurials and in later publications confirmed the attributes of methyl dopa.

He was one time chairman of the Society of Physicians in Wales, consultant to the Civil Service Sanatorium Society, member of the council and of the senate of the University Hospital of Wales, vice president of the Medical Protection Society, and member of the committee of management of the Medical Insurance Agency; from 1970 to 1974 he was a member of council of the British Cardiac Society. Awarded Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977, in 1981 he was made LL D

(Wales) in recognition of his distinguished contribution to medical education and the promotion of health.

He is remembered as an exceptionally able physician and a superb teacher of clinical method, gentle and caring in his dealings with patients and friendly, supportive, and loyal in his relationship with junior staff. As a first assistant at the London he had been inspired by Donald Hunter, William Evans, and Horace-Lord Evans and he often spoke of his indebtedness to them. They in turn regarded him with special affection. His tribute to William Evans, who survived in full vigour to the age of 92, appeared in the *British Heart Journal* in January 1989.

Enduring respect for Byron is evident especially from those who were his students in Cardiff. He took a close fatherly interest in the medical school rugby club, initiating the Provincial Hospitals Seven-a-side Tournament and donating the now much coveted Byron Evans cup. His sense of fun and expression of it with a stammer largely contrived—although in his student days it had been an embarrassment—are legendary. His hobbies included fishing on the Usk and the Teifi and sailing from Solva. He spoke Welsh fluently and true to his heritage had a great love of choral music. A compulsive conductor his style was unique, demanding, with uncharacteristic ferocity, *hwyl* before harmony and commitment before comprehension from choirs comprised usually of colleagues or disciples with opportunity if not cause for celebration. But those who may have concluded that the ease with which he emphasised the lighter aspects of life was one of his prime attributes would of course have been very wrong.

His illness before he died was protracted and sometimes distressing. Nursed expertly at home by his wife Kirsteen he showed courage, dignity, and unfailing humour. Greatly affected by the death of Pamela his first wife in 1973 he married Kirsteen in 1977 and had been blissfully happy in retirement. He is survived also by a son and twin daughters of his first marriage and by eight grandchildren.

EIRIAN WILLIAMS